

## ACHS SUMMARY FORM

M: 28-11-4

1. Name Sharp Street Methodist Church

Planning Area/Site Number 28/11

3. MNCPPC Atlas Reference Map 16  
L-14. Address 1310 Olney-Sandy Spring Road  
Sandy Spring

5. Classification Summary

Category buildingsOwnership privatePublic Acquisition NAStatus occupiedAccessible yes; restrictedPresent use religiousPrevious Survey Recording M-MNCPPC Federal    State x County x Local     
Inventory of Historical Sites 1976

6. Date built 1863, rebuilt 1923

7. Original Owner

8. Apparent Condition

Trustees of Sharp Street Church

a. goodc. original siteb. altered

9. Description

This one bay by four bay, 1½ story church faces north. Exterior walls are of common bonded brick. A buttress is centered on east and west elevations. A 1½ story ell begins on the west elevation and extends 3 bays across the north. There is a shed roofed lean-to addition across the south elevation. On the north elevation is a gabled pavilion, with double doors on either side. Each bay on the west and east is composed of 2 rows of 3 windows. There is a diamond-shaped window with red stained glass at the gable peak of the north elevation. The gable roof has 2 interior end chimneys. A bell tower sits on the shingled roof ridge near the center, with the metal bell visible within. There are 2 associated structures nearby, a large rectangular cinderblock building and a frame outhouse.

10. Significance Sharp Street Methodist Church is important as a focal point for the Sandy Spring black population. This community, free before the Civil War, has a good relationship with the Quaker community. Sharp Street Methodist Church was organized before the Civil War for the Sandy Spring black population. One acre of land was deeded in 1854 for use of the local "free people of color" as a house of worship, although the building itself appears to have already been constructed. That original church burned about 1885, and a new one was built. Teachers from nearby Quaker school came to the church and to the adjacent schoolhouse to teach children of the black community. Also on this land was the Sandy Spring Industrial School, an educational model around the turn of the century. The second church and the schoolhouse (constructed c. 1866) burned about 1920. The third and present church was constructed in 1923, at which time the Trustees received title to the land.

11. Date researched and researcher  
Ilona Bush 197812. Compiler  
Eileen McGuckian13. Date Compiled  
12/7814. Designation  
Approval

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M: 28/11<sup>4</sup>  
Sandy Spring HD  
Mag1 #

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Sharp Street Methodist Church

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1310 Olney-Sandy Spring Road

CITY, TOWN

Sandy Spring

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

—DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

—STRUCTURE

—SITE

—OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

—PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

—BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

—IN PROCESS

—BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

☒ OCCUPIED

—UNOCCUPIED

—WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

—YES: UNRESTRICTED

—NO

**PRESENT USE**

—AGRICULTURE

—MUSEUM

—COMMERCIAL

—PARK

—EDUCATIONAL

—PRIVATE RESIDENCE

—ENTERTAINMENT

☒ RELIGIOUS

—GOVERNMENT

—SCIENTIFIC

—INDUSTRIAL

—TRANSPORTATION

—MILITARY

—OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Trustees, Sharp Street United  
Methodist Church

Telephone #: 774-7047

STREET & NUMBER

c/o Mabel D. Thomas, 200 Norwood Road

CITY, TOWN

Silver Spring

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 20904

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: 332

Folio #: 137

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

MNCPPC Inventory of Historical Sites

DATE

1976

—FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☒ COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Park Historian's Office

CITY, TOWN

Derwood

STATE

Maryland 20855

**7 DESCRIPTION**

M:28-11-4

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A plaque on the Sharp Street Church states that it was first built in 1863, remodeled in 1887, and rebuilt in 1923. According to the Sandy Spring Postmaster, the church was remodeled recently.

This one bay by four bay, one-and-a-half story church faces north on Route 108. The exterior walls are constructed of common bonded brick. A buttress is centered on the east and west elevations. A lean-to shed roof structure is located at the south corner of the east elevation. A one-and-a-half story ell begins at the south corner of the west elevation and is three bays across on its north elevation. There is a shed-roofed lean-to addition which extends across the south elevation.

A gabled pavilion projects forward from the north elevation. On the north elevation there are four vertical panels each composed of four colored glass sections. The east and west facades of the pavilion are clapboarded and have modern hollow double doors each with triple-paned vertical lights. Two poured concrete steps lead up to each door. The lower step extends across the north facade.

Each bay on the east and west elevations is composed of two rows of three windows; each individual unit is a one-over-one double hung window. On the north elevation of the west ell, there is the same arrangement, but using, instead, six-over-six double hung windows as the individual unit. There is a diamond-shaped window with red stained glass at the gable peak of the north elevation.

The gable roof has green and gray asbestos shingles. There are two interior end chimneys on the south and west gable ends. A bell tower sits on the roof ridge near the center of the roof. It has a bell roof with metal covering supported by four round-headed arches standing on a square base. The metal bell is visible within.

To the southeast of the church are two associated structures. The nearest is a one-story rectangular cinderblock building with a gable roof covered by asbestos shingles. There are four openings which are covered by large board-and-batten shutters. There is a paneled door at the east and west ends. Further to the east is a two-and-a-half story, two-bay by four-bay wooden frame building covered by yellow brick asbestos siding built on ashlar block foundations. There are six-over-six double hung windows. The north (front) door has been covered by a modern padlocked vertical wood door. This door is surmounted by a two light transom. The gable roof is covered by corrugated metal. There is an interior stove chimney on the west. A frame outhouse labeled "Ladies" is located between these two structures. It has a shed roof and vertical board siding. A tall fence of closely spaced vertical boards shields the door to the outhouse.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Local History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1822; c.1863; 1923 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sharp Street Methodist Church is important as a religious, social, and educational focal point for the oldest free black community in Montgomery County. It is the first independent black church organized in Montgomery County.

The early settlers in Sandy Spring were Quakers who brought to the area their scientific acumen and sense of fairness and equality for all human beings. The Sandy Spring Meeting House was established in 1753. Several Quaker families freed their slaves around the time of the Revolutionary War, and most were emancipated and living in the area as free Negroes long before the Civil War which freed the majority of Negroes in the rest of the County.

Sharp Street Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in 1822.<sup>1</sup> The name "Sharp Street" was probably taken from the church of that name in Baltimore, founded in 1802 by free Negroes and considered to be the mother church of black Methodism. Four years later a Deed of Trust in the amount of ten cents for the "Sandy Spring Colored Church" was recorded.<sup>2</sup> The congregation apparently had available to them a building in which to worship, for on April 24, 1855, a deed was recorded from Thomas S. Brooke and Sophia Annette Brooke, his wife, to William H. Stabler, Richard T. Bentley, and Alban Gilpin, in which the Brookes conveyed one acre of land for the sum of \$40. The deed referred to the "colored people's Meeting House", and stated that this land was for use of the colored people of Sandy Spring, "Subject nevertheless to the reservation and agreement hereinafter contained, and it is hereby understood, covenanted and agreed and stipulated that whenever the free people of color aforesaid or their descendants shall cease to occupy said lot of ground for the purposes above mentioned or shall appropriate the same to any other purpose such as for a mart for merchandise (sic), spirituous liquors, or manufacturing establishment or in whatever other way it may be converted or diverted from the purposes first herein specified that this indenture be void and of none effect and said land and premises shall revert back to said Thomas S. Brooke and his heirs and assigns and not to the State of Maryland;..."<sup>3</sup>

The Sharp Street Church burned to the ground in 1885, and the following year Richard T. Bentley sold to Remus I. Hill, Samuel E. Powell, Samuel Budd, Daniel Budd, and Levi Hill, trustees of the Independent Methodist Church of colored people of Sandy Spring for \$1, the one acre of land which had been conveyed to him by the Brookes in 1855. This tract was "To be held for the people of Color inhabiting and residing near Sandy Spring Meeting house as a place for the interment of the dead and for erecting thereon a House of Worship or a School house and for no other use or interest whatsoever."<sup>4</sup> The title was held by those trustees until 1923, when Samuel

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(continued on Attachment Sheet A)

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Sandy Spring HD  
Magi #

Attachment Sheet A

Sharp Street Methodist Church

Eli Powell, the surviving trustee, sold the tract to the trustees of Sharp Street Methodist Church, Inc., now a corporation.<sup>5</sup> The church had burned in 1920, and the present church was constructed.

Besides being the religious center for generations of free Sandy Spring Negroes, the Church has been the center of numerous social and cultural activities. The Sandy Spring Annals note fairs, revivals, rummage sales for the benefit of the industrial school, sewing schools, Temperance Unions, debating and musical clubs, anti-cigarette league, and a trade parade. Sandy Spring hosted a Negro State Fair in 1909, attracting farmers from all over the State.<sup>6</sup> A study of Sandy Spring in 1898 showed that two-thirds of the black property owners in the area had been free before the Civil War, and that the average holding was six acres.

Sharp Street has been an educational focal point of the community for almost as long as it has been a religious one. The Quakers fostered educational institutions early in the 19th century, long before the Maryland legislature established public schools. Teachers from those nearby private schools sometimes spent time after normal school hours with scholars in the black community. A free school, supported by the New England Freedmen's Aid Society and the Baltimore Association, was in existence at Sharp Street Church by 1864.<sup>7</sup> And two years later:

"Another school was organized in the neighborhood during the present year altogether as successful, and probably quite as useful as the preceding. A school for colored people was no new thing in our neighborhood; and though the attempt to keep it up was often interrupted and the school dispersed by violence under color of law, it served among sundry other causes to attract and retain the more valuable class of operatives. Viewed in a merely material and selfish light, it was a benefit to us all."<sup>8</sup>

Higher black education around the turn of the 20th century followed Booker T. Washington's philosophy of manual training, and in 1908 the Maryland Normal and Agricultural Institute at Sandy Spring was opened, with one teacher and seven students. The school grew rapidly, and offered agricultural, manual training, household, and teacher training departments. Sponsored by the County School Board, the school received a state appropriation of \$600 a year. However, when principal George H.C. Williams left in 1909, the School Board could not find a replacement, and the Institute closed in 1911.<sup>9</sup> It was replaced by the Sandy Spring Industrial School, which operated until about 1926.<sup>10</sup> The school building burned down, was replaced by the Oddfellows Hall, and still remains.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

See Attachment Sheet B

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

On Olney Sandy Spring Road (Route 108), intersection of Norwood Road.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Ilona F. Bush, Researcher

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Sugarloaf Regional TrailsJuly 1978

STREET &amp; NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Box 87926-4510

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

DickersonMaryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO:

~~State and Historical Trust~~  
~~The Shrine of the State Circle~~  
~~Annapolis, Maryland 21401~~  
~~(301) 267-1438~~

SUGARLOAF REGIONAL TRAILS

Box 87, Stronghold  
 Dickerson, Md. 20753  
 (301) 926-4510

Attachment Sheet B  
Sharp Street Methodist Church

M: 28/11-4  
Magi #  
Sandy Spring H.D.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 Annals of Sandy Spring, Volume III, p. 68 (August 6, 1897), refers to celebration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of Sharp Street Church.
- 2 Land Records of Montgomery County, Md., Y304
- 3 Ibid., JGH3/232.
- 4 Ibid., JA2/27.
- 5 Ibid., 332/137.
- 6 McMaster, Richard, and Hiebert, Ray, A Grateful Remembrance, (Montgomery County Government and the Montgomery County Historical Society, 1976), p. 246.
- 7 Ibid., P.190
- 8 Annals, op. cit., p. 25 (1866).
- 9 A Grateful Remembrance, op. cit., p. 246-7.
- 10 Clarke, Nina H. and Brown, Lillian B., History of the Black Public Schools of Montgomery County, Md., (Vantage Press, New York, (1978), p. 23, 56.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Land Records of Montgomery County, Md.  
Interview with members of Sharp Street Church (Lena Snowden, Bertha Bishop, and Amanda Winters), May 1978.
- Annals of Sandy Spring, Md.  
Thom, W.T., "The Negroes of Sandy Spring: A Social Study", U.S. Bureau of Labor, Bulletin #32, (Washington 1901).
- Baker, Gordon Pratt, ed., Those Incredible Methodists, (Commission on Archives & History, The Baltimore Conference, Baltimore 1972).
- Clarke, Nina H. and Brown, Lillian B., History of the Black Public Schools of Montgomery County, Md., (Vantage Press, New York 1978).
- McMaster, Richard, and Hiebert, Ray, A Grateful Remembrance, (Montgomery County Government and the Montgomery County Historical Society, 1976).

### Scale 80 Rods to One Inch

**Wm S. Bond,**  
*Manufacturer of Bone Dust, LXL, and  
 Dissolved Bone, Sandy Spring, MD.  
 See Spencerville Plan*

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1





NAME	SHARP STREET (NEGRO) CHURCH	#28-11-4	S.S. HIST. DIST.
LOCATION	Rt 108	SANDY SPRING MD	
FACADE	NE		
PHOTO TAKEN	8/14/75	MDWYER	